

## Structure–Activity Relationships of Non-imidazole H<sub>3</sub> Receptor Ligands. Part 1

Ramin Faghih,\* Wesley Dwight, Robert Gentles, Kathleen Phelan, Timothy A. Esbenshade, Lynne Ireland, Thomas R. Miller, Chae-Hee Kang, Gerard B. Fox, Sujatha M. Gopalakrishnan, Arthur A. Hancock and Youssef L. Bennani

Neuroscience Research, Global Pharmaceutical Research and Development, Abbott Laboratories, Abbott Park, IL 60064-6123, USA

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**Abstract**—SAR studies for novel non-imidazole containing H<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonists with high potency and selectivity for rat H<sub>3</sub> receptors are described. A high throughput screening lead, A-923, was further elaborated in a systematic manner to clarify a pharmacophore for this class of aryloxyalkyl piperazine based compounds. © 2002 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

The histamine class of receptors has been a fertile ground for the development of important therapeutic agents. It is well established that allergic conditions can be controlled by blockade of H<sub>1</sub> receptors, while relief of gastric ulcers through modulation of H<sub>2</sub> receptors is highly efficacious therapy.<sup>1</sup> Histamine mediates its action both in the CNS and the periphery through four distinct receptors known to date.<sup>2</sup> Although the histamine-3 receptor (H<sub>3</sub>R) was discovered over 15 years ago, the following decade provided minimal medicinal chemistry advancement in non-imidazole based H<sub>3</sub> agents.<sup>3</sup> This slow progress is partially due to the lack of potent, selective, and safe agents which hindered understanding of the H<sub>3</sub>R role in pathophysiology and the delay in successful cloning of this receptor.<sup>4</sup> The H<sub>3</sub> receptor was originally described as a presynaptic receptor regulating the synthesis and release of histamine. H<sub>3</sub>Rs not only act as autoreceptors, but are also involved in presynaptic regulation of the release of acetylcholine, gamma-aminobutyric acid, dopamine, noradrenaline and serotonin. H<sub>3</sub>R modulation could have therapeutic utility in cognitive disorders, including but not limited to attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and in obesity among other potential benefits.<sup>5</sup> The increasing interest in the therapeutic potential of H<sub>3</sub> agonists and/or antagonists is driving current medicinal chemistry efforts to identify potent, selective, therapeutically efficacious and safe agents for clinical development.<sup>6</sup> A-923 (Fig. 1) was identified from

high throughput screening (HTS) of the Abbott compound collection as a ~2 nM affinity ligand at rat H<sub>3</sub>R. Its non-imidazole containing features differentiated it from most early H<sub>3</sub> receptor ligands, although during the completion of this work several publications reported new non-imidazole H<sub>3</sub> antagonists with comparable or inferior potency compare to A-923. However, further characterization revealed its poor selectivity versus other histaminergic receptors. We describe here in Part I of a two-part series of Letters (see following manuscript) some pharmacophoric features of these non-imidazole H<sub>3</sub> receptor ligands.<sup>7</sup> A systematic modification of parts A–E of this lead molecule was conducted using parallel synthesis when possible.

### Modification of the Carbamate Functionality (section A)

Commercially available phenol **1** (Scheme 1) was treated with 1-bromo-3-chloropropane in the presence of K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> in refluxing 2-butanone for 24 h. The resulting *O*-alkyl chloride **2** (obtained in ~95% yield) was further treated, without purification, with *N*-Boc-piperazine to

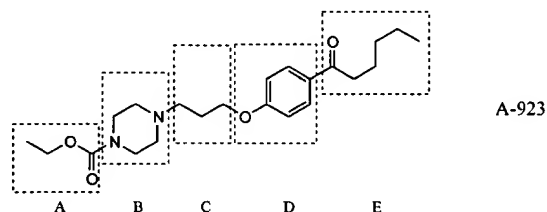
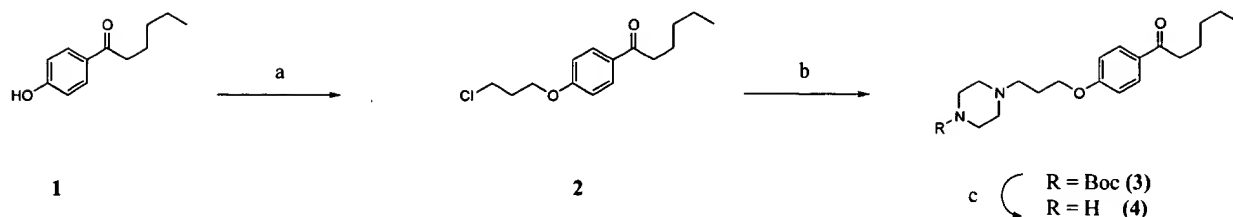


Figure 1.

\*Corresponding author. Fax: +1-847-937-4143; e-mail: ramin.faghih@abbott.com



Scheme 1. (a) Cl-(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>3</sub>-Br, K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, 2-butanone, reflux 24 h; (b) *N*-Boc-piperazine, KI/K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, 2-butanone, reflux 72 h; (c) TFA-CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 0 °C to rt, 12 h.

Table 1. Binding affinities<sup>a</sup> (pK<sub>i</sub>) at rat cortical H<sub>3</sub> and human H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> receptors<sup>9</sup>

Compd: <sup>b</sup> R	H <sub>3</sub>	H <sub>1</sub>	H <sub>2</sub>	R	H <sub>3</sub>	H <sub>1</sub>	H <sub>2</sub>	R	H <sub>3</sub>	H <sub>1</sub>	H <sub>2</sub>
4: H	7.57	5.22	4.84	17: CO-Ph	7.44	6.54	4.91	30: CO-Et	8.50	5.72	4.5
5: CO <sub>2</sub> Me	8.52	5.97	4.92	18: CO-2-thiophene	7.79	7.13	4.83	31: CO-Pr	8.19	6.06	4.64
6: CO <sub>2</sub> Et (A-923)	8.86	6.56	4.90	19: CO-5-Me-2-thioph.	7.80	7.01	5.09	32: CO- <i>i</i> Pr	8.35	5.40	4.53
7: CO <sub>2</sub> Bu	7.69	6.24	5.73	20: CO-3-Cl-2-thioph.	7.53	7.10	4.71	33: CO-cyclopropyl	8.67	5.75	4.50
8: CO <sub>2</sub> <i>i</i> Pr	8.30	6.51	4.75	21: CO-2-furan	7.98	6.40	4.70	34: CO-cyclobutyl	8.50	6.45	4.99
9: CO <sub>2</sub> <i>i</i> Bu	8.00	6.56	5.43	22: CO-3-Me-2-furan	8.07	6.98	4.89	35: CO-CH <sub>2</sub> -Ph	8.00	7.25	5.05
10: CONH- <i>i</i> Pr	8.02	5.92	4.95	23: CO-2- <i>N</i> -Me-pyrrole	8.39	7.25	4.93	36: CO-CH <sub>2</sub> -S-Et	7.96	5.96	4.64
11: CONH-Et	7.67	5.80	4.63	24: CO-5-oxazole	7.35	5.37	4.56	37: CO-COH(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	7.24	4.67	4.61
12: CO-pyrrolidine	8.13	5.98	4.83	25: CO-5-imidazole	8.35	6.28	4.71	38: Propyl	7.56	5.47	4.56
13: CO-morph.	8.23	5.38	4.75	26: CO-2-pyrazine	7.74	5.69	4.33	39: CH <sub>2</sub> -cycloprop.	7.80	5.65	4.73
14: SO <sub>2</sub> Me	7.67	4.58	4.08	27: CO-2-pyridine	7.28	6.38	4.73	40: Butyl	7.87	6.18	5.12
15: SO <sub>2</sub> <i>i</i> Pr	7.90	4.95	4.68	28: CO-3-pyridine	7.69	6.14	4.22	41: Isobutyl	8.03	6.34	5.02
16: SO <sub>2</sub> (4-CN)-Ph	7.43	4.87	4.91	29: CO-4-pyridine	8.20	6.32	4.65	42: CH <sub>2</sub> -2-thiazole	7.78	7.22	5.15

<sup>a</sup>Values were estimated from at least three separate competition experiments (SEM ≤ 0.2).

<sup>b</sup>Satisfactory <sup>1</sup>H NMR, MS spectra and elemental analyses were obtained for all new compounds.

give **3** in 75–82% yield after s.g.c. TFA treatment in dichloromethane provided piperazine **4** ready for parallel synthesis (Scheme 1). A group of about 75 *N*-acyl, *N*-alkyl, sulfonamides, sulfonylureas, and ureas were prepared using standard acylation chemistry or reductive amination to give compounds **5–42**. These were assayed in a binding experiment using rat cortex in order to probe the SAR of the H<sub>3</sub> receptor.

Data from Table 1 indicate a fairly well defined pharmacophore at the piperazine-*N*-substitution. Compound **33** showed the same high affinity for the rat H<sub>3</sub>R as the HTS lead A-923; however, with a better selectivity for the human H<sub>1</sub> receptor, several other substitutions altering various physicochemical properties of the molecule were tolerated (i.e., imidazole **25**; morpholine urea **13**). Most other structural alterations resulted in lower H<sub>3</sub> affinities.

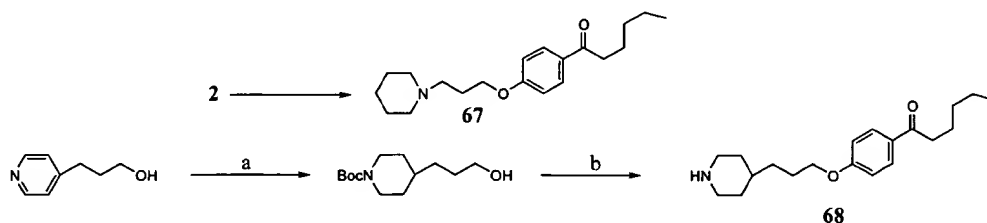
dine, homopiperazine, 4-aminopiperidine, 4-piperidino-piperidine, etc. (e.g., **67**, H<sub>3</sub>R = 7.20), with no significant improvement in affinity at rat H<sub>3</sub>R. More importantly, we demonstrated that exchange of the piperazine basic nitrogen in A-923 to a carbon atom (**68**, Scheme 2) resulted in loss of affinity at the rat H<sub>3</sub>R (pK<sub>i</sub> = 4.23). Additionally, both the length (2-, 3-, and 4-atom linker) and substitution of the 3-carbon chain linker was further substituted with methyl and/or aryl at either the 1-, 2-, or 3-position in both enantiomeric forms. This resulted in no improvement in affinity with minor selectivity towards the *R*-enantiomers at either the 1- or 2-position. The aromatic ring was examined to a lesser degree. In this case, substitutions at the ketone *ortho*-position (–NH<sub>2</sub>, –Cl, –F, –OMe) were tolerated, whereas substitutions at *meta*-positions were not additive.

### Modifications of Sections B–D<sup>8</sup>

The basic piperazine in A-923 was replaced with a variety of amines: morpholine, 2,6-dimethylmorpholine, pyrroli-

### Modification of the Ketone Functionality (Section E)

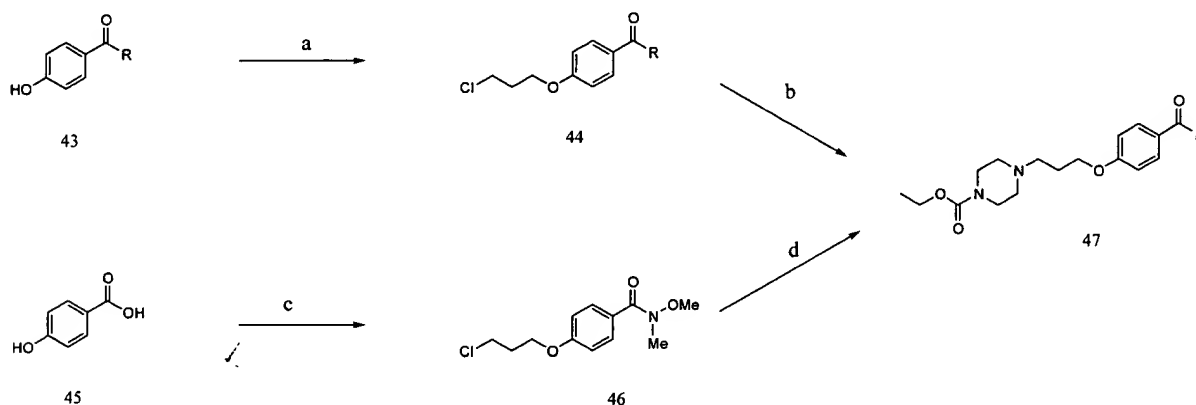
We next explored the ketone moiety while retaining the ethyl carbamate functionality in order to further explore SAR. We accessed such ketones via two routes (Scheme 2):



Scheme 2. (a) (i) Rh/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, CH<sub>3</sub>OH; (ii) (Boc)<sub>2</sub>, Hunig's, CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>; (b) (i) **1**, DEAD, PPh<sub>3</sub>, THF, 0 °C to rt, 48 h; (ii) TFA-CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 0 °C to rt, 12 h.

**Table 2.** Binding affinities<sup>a</sup> (pK<sub>i</sub>) at rat cortical H<sub>3</sub> and human H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> receptors

Compd: R	H <sub>3</sub>	H <sub>1</sub>	H <sub>2</sub>	R	H <sub>3</sub>	H <sub>1</sub>	H <sub>2</sub>	R	H <sub>3</sub>	H <sub>1</sub>	H <sub>2</sub>
48: -CH <sub>3</sub>	8.30	5.65	4.40	55: -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub>	8.44	6.13	4.65	61: - <i>p</i> -Me-S-Ph	7.23	6.35	5.21
49: -CH <sub>2</sub> CH <sub>3</sub>	8.27	5.78	4.25	56: -CH=(CH <sub>3</sub> ) <sub>2</sub>	7.41	6.45	4.66	62: - <i>p</i> -MeO-Ph	7.40	6.09	5.08
50: -C <sub>7</sub> H <sub>15</sub>	8.43	6.25	5.67	57: -C(CH <sub>3</sub> )=CH <sub>2</sub>	7.26	6.01	4.65	63: - <i>p</i> - <i>t</i> Bu-Ph	7.88	6.25	5.81
51: -C <sub>8</sub> H <sub>17</sub>	8.10	6.30	5.57	58: -CH <sub>2</sub> Ph	7.16	6.03	4.90	64: - <i>m</i> -Me-Ph	6.54	6.42	5.43
52: -Cyclopropyl	8.33	5.85	4.10	59: - <i>p</i> -F-Ph	7.17	6.68	4.37	65: - <i>t</i> -CH=CH-3'-pyrid.	8.20	6.37	4.60
53: -Cyclohexyl	7.60	6.22	5.10	60: -( <i>o,m</i> )-di-F-Ph	7.60	5.99	4.76	66: - <i>t</i> -CH=CH-4'-MeO-Ph	8.14	6.21	5.17
54: - <i>i</i> -Bu	8.14	6.03	4.16								

<sup>a</sup>Values were estimated from at least three separate competition experiments (SEM ≤ 0.2).**Scheme 3.** (a) Cl-(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>3</sub>-Br, K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, 2-butanone, reflux 24 h; (b) EtOCO-piperazine, KI/K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, 2-butanone, reflux 72 h; (c) (i) BnBr, K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, DMF; (ii) NaOH; (iii) (COCl)<sub>2</sub>, cat. DMF, CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>; (iv) MeONHMe, Et<sub>3</sub>N, CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>; (v) H<sub>2</sub>, Pd/C, CH<sub>3</sub>OH; (d) (i) EtOCO-piperazine, KI/K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, 2-butanone, reflux 72 h; (ii) RMgX, THF.

commercially available 4-hydroxyphenyl ketones were treated under basic conditions with 1-bromo-3-chloropropane followed by piperazine-*N*-ethylcarbamate to give the desired products. Alternatively, 4-hydroxybenzoic acid was *O*-benzyl alkylated and esterified in a one-pot reaction with BnBr-K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> followed by hydrolysis. The carboxylic acid, thus obtained, was treated with oxalyl chloride followed with *N*-methoxy-*N*-methylamine to give the corresponding Weinreb amide.<sup>10</sup> Further *O*-debenzylation under hydrogen/Pd conditions followed by *O*-alkylation and *N*-ethylcarbamate piperazine-*N*-alkylation (see above) gave the template amide. The latter was treated with various Grignard reagents to provide the corresponding ketones (Scheme 3).

Table 2 displays binding affinities of compounds where various substitutions were made at the alkyl ketone level. While a range of substituents can be tolerated (long fatty chain to aryl and cinnamoyl type groups), none provided for an enhanced affinity at the rat H<sub>3</sub>R.

In summary, SAR data on A-923 have revealed the following: (1) the hydrophobic ketone region can be expanded; (2) small *N*-acyl (33 or 25) analogues with a basic site are tolerated; (3) small size chain substitutions are tolerated but do not increase affinity; and (4) the piperazine basic site in A-923 is mandatory for binding/recognition of the ligand at the rat H<sub>3</sub> receptor. From the lead compound it appears that a putative pharmacophore would be a tertiary amine, preferably a 4-atom-long linker and an aromatic ring to be favorable. Substitution patterns around this core system should allow for optimizing physicochemical features to improve oral

bioavailability, receptor selectivity, CNS-penetration and in vivo biological efficacy.

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